

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 JUSE-00 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 COME-00 /027 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN JVMONTVILLE

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EB/CBA/BP:RBUSHNELL

R/NEA:KHUFFMAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 119875

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, MO

SUBJECT:JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REQUEST TO MEET OCP OFFICIALS
VISITING U.S.

1. FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION, JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE MEETING BETWEEN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION OFFICERS AND OFFICE CHERIFIEN DES PHOSPHATES (OCP) OFFICIALS WHO ARRIVING U.S. FOR CONFERENCE WEEKEND OF MAY 24. PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO SEEK OCP COOPERATION IN DEVELOPING INFORMATION ON AMERICAN PHOSPHATE FIRMS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN POSSIBLE CONSPIRACY TO FIX INTERNATIONAL PHOSPHATE ROCK PRICES AND/OR ALLOCATE INTERNATIONAL MARKETS IN VIOLATION OF SHERMAN ANTI-TRUST ACT. JUSTICE STATES OCP AND U.S. PHOSPHATE INDUSTRY ARE WELL AWARE THAT INVESTIGATION IS GOING ON.

2. JUSTICE OFFICERS ACCOMPANIED BY DEPTOFFS FROM NEA/AFN AND EB CALLED ON MOROCCAN COUNSELOR BENJELLOUN MAY 21 TO EXPLAIN INVESTIGATION AND SEEK MOROCCAN EMBASSY'S HELP IN CONFIDENTIAL

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TRYING TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS WITH MOHAMMED KARIM-LAMRANI AND OTHER OCP OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON OR AT SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE NEXT WEEK. JUSTICE OFFICIALS WERE FRANK TO POINT OUT THAT IF INVESTIGATION ULTIMATELY REVEALS THAT OCP

HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH U.S. FIRMS IN RESTRAINT OF TRADE IN

INTERNATIONAL PHOSPHATE MARKET, OCP AND ITS OFFICERS COULD BE INDICTED AS DEFENDANTS OR CO-CONSPIRATORS WHETHER OR NOT THEY PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN U.S. IMPLICATION WAS CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD THEN BE SUBJECT TO ARREST IF THEY LATER VISITED UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, JUSTICE OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED THAT PRINCIPAL INTEREST IN PROPOSED INTERVIEWS WAS IN GAINING INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT, AND THAT VOLUNTARY COOPERATION BY OCP IN INVESTIGATION WOULD BE TO OCP'S ADVANTAGE. IF AMERICAN COMPANIES ARE IN FACT INNOCENT, OCP COOPERATION WOULD BE USEFUL IN DEMONSTRATING THIS FACT TO DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

3. BENJELLOUN TOOK CAREFUL NOTES AND SAID HE WOULD DO HIS BEST AFTER CONSULTING WITH AMBASSADOR BOUTALEB TO TRY TO ARRANGE REQUESTED INTERVIEWS. DEPTOFFS EXPLAINED TO BENJELLOUN THAT THEY WERE PRESENT AT MEETING TO ASSURE THAT FOREIGN POLICY ELEMENTS OF QUESTION RECEIVED NECESSARY ATTENTION IN THIS EXERCISE IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF U.S. LAW.

4. JUSTICE OFFICIALS TOLD DEPARTMENT OFFICERS THAT THEY WOULD HAVE POWER TO SUBPOENA OCP OFFICIALS WHILE THEY WERE IN UNITED STATES, BUT THAT THEY DID NOT INTEND TO DO SO DURING THIS VISIT. THEY WOULD SEEK VOLUNTARY COOPERATION AND IF MOROCCANS DID NOT COOPERATE, POSSIBILITY OF SUBPOENA WOULD BE CONSIDERED IF OCP OFFICIALS MADE SUBSEQUENT TRIP TO U.S.

5. IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT OCP OFFICIALS WILL CONSULT WITH THEIR FRIENDS IN U.S. PHOSPHATE INDUSTRY AND PERHAPS WITH LEGAL COUNSEL TO U.S. INDUSTRY BEFORE THEY REPLY TO DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE REQUEST.

6. JUSTICE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN FULLY BRIEFED ON SPECIAL CHARACTER OF OCP AS GOM MONOPOLY AND KARIM-LAMRANI'S CONFIDENTIAL

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STATURE AS FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND CONTINUING CONFIDANT OF KING HASSAN. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT JUSTICE OFFICIALS AWARE OF POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES. FACT THAT REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW MADE IN ADVANCE THROUGH EMBASSY SHOULD MINIMIZE POSSIBLE ADVERSE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. INGERSOLL

CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PHOSPHATES, PRICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE119875
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA/AFN JVMONTVILLE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750180-0385
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197505103/baaaaklx.tel
Line Count: 103
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <03 DEC 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971014
Subject: n/a
TAGS: ETRD, MO
To: RABAT INFO CASABLANCA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006